

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	South Carolina
COUNTY:	Aiken
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 8 1973

1. NAME

COMMON: Redcliffe

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 1 1/2 mi. ^{NE} of Beech Island, S. C. on Hwy. 125. Bounded on the W. by Hwy. 125, E. by 278, N. by the property of George McElmurry Davies; S. by property of Paul Dunbar & property of Mrs. J. T. Willis.

CITY OR TOWN: Beech Island

STATE: South Carolina CODE: 045 COUNTY: Aiken CODE: 003

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

Yes:
 Restricted
 Unrestricted
 No

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: John Shaw Billings

STREET AND NUMBER: Redcliffe

CITY OR TOWN: North Augusta STATE: South Carolina CODE: 045

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Aiken County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Aiken STATE: South Carolina CODE: 045

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic Survey: Lower Savannah Regional Council

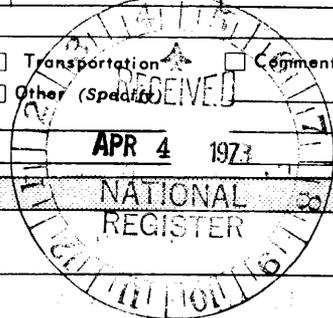
DATE OF SURVEY: 1971 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: South Carolina Department of Archives and History

STREET AND NUMBER: P. O. Box 11188

CITY OR TOWN: Columbia STATE: South Carolina CODE: 045

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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7/6/73

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

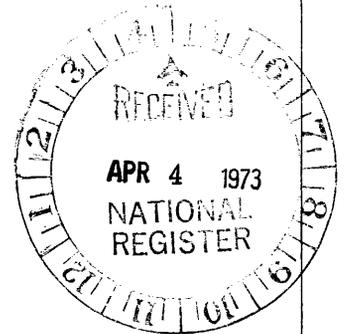
Redcliffe, begun in 1857 by James Henry Hammond, is a two-story house of wooden construction. Originally, the house stood nine feet above the ground. Double decked porches were built on all four sides. Only the front and back porches had steps down to the ground. Large French windows in all rooms opened on to the porches, upper and lower. An enclosed cupola or observatory, consisting almost entirely of windows, was built on the roof between the two chimneys. Each floor consisted of one central hall with two rooms on either side. The flooring was done in heart pine. Local sycamore trees furnished the wood for the doors, mantels, and banisters. Bookcases of sycamore were made for the library by a German craftsman.

The first major change came immediately after the Hammond family moved into the house. Chilling winds swept through the open space under the house. To control the chill factor, the under area was bricked around the nine feet walls. Later the basement was partitioned off with brick walls into four rooms to match the other floors. Brick soon replaced the sand floors.

In 1886, another major change altered the appearance of Redcliffe. The flat open porches had been damaged greatly, due to the lack of proper drainage. Harry Hammond, son of the builder, removed the upper porches bringing the main steps down from the corner of the new single piazza. This change marred the classic symmetry of the house. In July, 1901, the observatory on the roof was removed as a fire hazard. A widow's walk replaced the former cupola.

A young landscape architect, Louis Berckman from Belgium, planned the grounds at Redcliffe. An avenue of magnolia grandiflora was planted. The open fields near the house were used for scientific experiments with vineyards and fruit trees.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1857 - 1973

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<u>Journalism</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Redcliffe is representative of the architectural styles in the South during the early nineteenth century. Built on brick pillars like many of the Low Country houses, Redcliffe maintained the pattern of a central hall with four rooms, so characteristic of the Carolina Up Country. Originally Georgian in style, the house now features many Greek Revival elements. Two slave quarters remain, illustrating the pattern of life prior to the War Between the States.

The builder of Redcliffe, James Henry Hammond, was born on November 15, 1807, at Stony Battery, Newberry District in South Carolina. In 1825, he graduated from the South Carolina College. After reading law in Columbia, South Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia, he was admitted to the bar in 1828. He was elected to the United States Congress in 1834, several years after his marriage to Catherine Fitzsimons. Hammond was elected Governor of South Carolina in 1842. During his two terms as Governor, he secured the transformation of the arsenal at Columbia and the Citadel into military academies. He became a United States Senator in 1857. In the troubled days before the War Between the States, Hammond realized the importance of cotton to the agricultural South. "Cotton is King" he declared in the Senate chambers. Hammond was greatly interested in the improvements of farming methods. In the 1840's he promoted the use of marl. Ahead of his time in social awareness, he provided hospital care for his workers and gave nursery care to the children of working mothers. In December, 1855, he was interested in the organization of the Beech Island Agricultural Society. Due to his interest in agriculture, he was visited by Richard Lamb Allen, who in 1842 founded the AMERICAN AGRICULTURIST.

The present owner of Redcliffe is John Shaw Billings, a descendant of Hammond. Educated at Harvard, Billings later went to TIME magazine. He became Managing Editor of TIME, then Managing Editor of LIFE. At one time, Billings was called the editorial prime minister of TIME -- LIFE, Inc., being Editorial Director of all TIME Inc. An important figure in American journalism, John Shaw Billings had a front seat in American history.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS